

July 25, 2018.

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket Nos. 18-143, 10-90 and 14-58; FCC 18-57
Proposed Rule by FCC on 06/13/2018 ID: FCC-2018-0212-0002
<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings>

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As a governmental organization that provides vital services to the citizens of Canóvanas, a Municipality of Puerto Rico, and that we have been a key instrument in providing our population of around fifty thousand people, the first response and aid in the aftermath of the hurricanes, we submit these comments for consideration by the Commission regarding the implementation of **Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund**.

The Commission has publicly recognized the need for a long-term solution to rebuild, improve, and expand service in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the wake of the devastation of communication networks. The Commission proposes to dedicate funding specifically to fixed and mobile providers to provide critical fixed voice and broadband services.

It is imperative that the FCC understands that any long-term investment in the communications infrastructure of Puerto Rico must include satellite technology and land mobile radio facilities, and it must be a priority in any restoration funding efforts. Satellite broadband was the only reliable communications system in the aftermath of the hurricanes and must be fully implemented across the island in order to build a truly resilient and connected Puerto Rico. Satellite broadband is a multifaceted system that allows for cellular communication as well as internet connection. Because it is not a terrestrially based system, satellite is protected from the threat of storms and natural disasters. Satellite is also more cost effective, unlike installing cell towers, telephone poles and restringing fiber which can cost over \$22,000.00 per mile. Satellite can also connects even the most remote Puerto Rican communities to much needed emergency services and resources. Finally, satellite is a more timely solution to protect Puerto Rico in the fact of future natural disasters.

After experiencing the trauma that resulted from being isolated with no communication post Hurricane Maria, we are committed to our people in providing the security and confidence they deserve that in a future event like the one experienced, we are better prepared. One of the things to have in mind is the way we communicate in such events. To ensure that every family we serve will remain connected to each other, to emergency services, to community organizations, schools, hospitals, fire departments, government and more – regardless of storm or emergency severity, with a reliable communications system. That they can have access to all of the critical care services they need, including food, shelter, medical services, and emergency responders, at times of crisis, no matter how remote they are.

On behalf of Canóvanas citizens, as part of Puerto Rico's population, and hence US citizens, it is our request that you consider the undeniable need of reliable communication systems that can withstand natural disasters and prevent our population from ever suffer such devastation again.

In addition the FCC must consider locally based satellite facilities at the time of granting these funding. This will support economic development in our city and Puerto Rico; new entrants with exciting technology able to withstand extreme weather and natural disasters. For Stage 2 and later rounds of funding, FCC must consider making them available to new entrants with facilities in Puerto Rico.

As a local government that knows first-handed what our citizens need, we hope that you take our comments under consideration.

Thank you for your dedication to serving the people of Puerto Rico during this difficult time. Should you have any questions or wish to speak further, please contact us at 787-232-6065 or email to hommyvazquez@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Hommy Vazquez Apellániz
Emergency Management Director
Municipality of Canóvanas